

Thayer's Gull

13 Dec 1986

Red Rock Res., Marion Co., IA

\*S. Dinsmore

2-5 birds, also 19, 28 Dec; IBL 57:56, 77

Record Number: 86-25

Classification: A-D

DOCUMENTATION

Steve Dinsmore

VOTE: 1-II, 5-III, 1-V

III, I am only voting for one bird present and accounted for. The practice of consolidating 2 to 5 birds seen on 3 different dates over a 2 week span into one lump description precludes making a thorough evaluation of these birds. There is much variation in birds, especially gulls; light conditions and distances vary. If field notes were taken immediately following each of these observations, why is there no feeling in this documentation of the inevitable differences in circumstances and the subtle nuances in individual birds. We could all gain so much information by having a permanent record of all the details about encounters with this difficult-to-identify species.

V, Staudt and I viewed one bird above the dam which looked like Thayer's, but we decided not to call it. We didn't see any Thayer's below dam. What did Mark think?

III, Description is fairly good; I don't know if dark brown means extremely dark or closer to medium-chocolate color. Best description is not in description of bird but in elimination of similar species section. A more complete description of color shades would have helped this documentation.

III, Field marks do sound convincing but the numbers of reports we have this year makes you wonder why we haven't had hardly any before.

III, Description of primaries better than in birds seen at Saylorville (86-22a thru 22f). These birds probably came from Saylorville! However I can't accept the Saylorville docs on their face value.

REVOTE(at meeting, 30 May 1987): no change in vote.

86-235

Summary of Review of an Ornithologic Observation

86-25

by the Records Committee  
of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union

SPECIES: *Thayer's Gull*

DATE SEEN: *12-13-86*

SITE OF OBSERVATION: ~~#~~ *Red Rock Res.*

OBSERVERS: *S. Dinsmore*

DATE OF REVIEW: *5-30-87*

METHOD OF REVIEW: *Vote*

CLASSIFICATION OF RECORD: *III*

COMMENTS:

*Good description and field marks are convincing for this species.*

The opinions expressed here are based on the information available to the Committee and should not necessarily preclude an alternate interpretation by those who observed the bird firsthand.

Any action may be re-reviewed upon submission of additional evidence.

Explanation of Classification:

- I = labeled, diagnostic specimen, photograph, or recording available for review by the Committee
- II = acceptable sight record documented independently by 3 or more observers
- III = acceptable sight record documented by 1 or 2 observers
- IV = probably correct record, but not beyond doubt
- V = record with insufficient evidence to judge
- VI = probably incorrect identification, escapee, or otherwise unacceptable record

Classification is based on the highest category agreed upon by six of seven committee members.



86-25

DOCUMENTATION FORM

Species?Thayer's Gull

How Many?2-5 first-winter birds

Location?Red Rock Res., Marion Co.-below dam and near the Hwy 14 bridge

Habitat?resting on sand bar below dam and feeding near open water on main lake

Date?13,19,28 Dec 1986

Time?variable-seen first around 10:00 A.M. on 13 Dec

Observers Name and address:Steve Dinsmore, Ames

Others who saw bird:Mark Proescholdt, Tom Kent, Tom Staudt

Description of bird:All of the birds closely resembled the numerous first-winter Herring Gulls in direct comparison. The birds were mostly an even dark brown color all over. The wings were also dark brown with the outer primaries slightly darker than the rest of the wing. The undersides of their wings were silvery-white with no darker areas. The tails were the same color as the body, becoming slightly darker near the tip. All of the birds had dark legs and slender, dark bills. All birds also had smaller, rounder heads than Herring Gulls in direct comparison. All of the birds also appeared to be slightly smaller than a Herring Gull.

Similar species and how eliminated:The dark tail band and fairly dark body coloration should eliminate Iceland Gull. The smaller bill, rounder head, smaller size, more even body coloration, and pale undersides of the wings eliminates first-winter Herring Gull.

Viewing conditions and equipment:Viewing conditions were good. Estimated viewing distance was as close as 50 yards. I used Nikon 8 x 23 binoculars and a Bushnell 20-45x spotting scope.

Previous experience with species:I saw numerous Thayer's Gulls in Iowa this fall-Saylorville Reservoir, Rathbun Reservoir, and Keokuk.

References consulted:NGS Field Guide to the Birds of North America

How long before field notes were made?immediately after each sighting

How long before this form was completed?written 10 hours after first sighting and updated after each initial sighting.